



Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland News

October 2021

Dates to Remember

Help restore Travis Wetland

Travis Wetland Trust Work Days are an opportunity to help the Travis Wetland Trust and Christchurch City Council restore the wetland. Meet people interested in restoring the native biodiversity of our city, share ideas and do some light physical work. Tasks vary according to the seasons and range from planting, release weed-ing and invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

When: Third Saturday of every month 9am to 12.00pm.

Where: Meet at the Education Centre near the Beach Road car park.

What: Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season e.g. sunhat, raincoat, warm hat.

Saturday Work day dates for 2021/22 are:

- 16 October, 20 November, 18 December with Christmas BBQ (Covid level allowing)
- 15 January, 19 February, 19 March, 16 April

A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust 2022 financial year began in July. A subscription renewal form will be included with this newsletter if you have not already paid a subscription for the current year. **The Trust account is Kiwibank 38-9018-0341728-00. Subscriptions may also be paid by credit card on the website page "Contact/ Membership Form" or with cash at the AGM. Call the treasurer if you have no suitable way to make a payment.** Please help the Trust continue its restoration work at Travis Wetland by paying an annual subscription and/or making a tax-deductible donation. Dave Evans
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Trees for Canterbury Planting Day

Article: Sue Britain,

This was our biggest planting event of the year, so it was great to be at Covid Level 2 to host the 75 or so keen folk who came along. The weather was kind, with a cool easterly breeze.

Gumboots were necessary to wade through a stream and slither in the mud to the site west of the main pond. This area gives different views from the those seen from the track.

Trees for Canterbury provided most of the 800 plants for the day. For over 2 decades they have supported Travis in this way and their network brings in many keen volunteers for us too. Thank you TFC.

Volunteers of all ages were soon very busy digging holes in the muddy ground. Several trips were made to bring in more plants to match their enthusiasm. Some of our youngest volunteers admired the prowess of the electric light utility vehicle used to bring in plants and supplies, spraying muddy water in its wake.

Sadly, we were not able to provide refreshments for planters this year due to Covid restrictions. Colin Meurk, John Skilton (park ranger) and Robin from Trees for Canterbury spoke briefly to thank everyone and give a brief history of work at Travis and their hopes for the future.

Work days and Covid precautions

We are able to hold monthly work days at Covid alert level 2. Stay home if you are unwell or if you have been asked to isolate. Please scan the QR code on arrival or sign in. Maintain 2m distance from fellow workers. We'll be providing refreshments outside after the work day, bring your own cup if you wish.

Christchurch
City Council



Harlequin ladybird, *Harmonia axyridis*

- Article and images: Grahame

Well it had to happen. Travis is now host to one of the most invasive ladybird species, the Harlequin Ladybird, *Harmonia axyridis*. First found in New Zealand in 2016 in Auckland it has rapidly spread down the entire North Island and is now also present down most of the east coast of the South Island.

They are native to eastern Asia and because of their voracious appetites for aphids were introduced into the US and parts of Europe as a bio control agent. They have now spread across all of North America and most of central and South America. Also most of Europe and the UK.

Because of it's voracious appetite it can out compete other species of ladybird (and is known to eat ladybird eggs and larvae) for the available food supply causing population crashes in native species. It is also resistant to diseases that kill other ladybird species. Good reasons why this is known as one of the worlds most invasive insects.



This is a really variable species when it comes to markings ranging from red and orange with few to many black spots through to black with a varying number of orange and red spots. They are quite a large ladybird adults being in the 5 – 8mm range. One of the better ways of telling this species from others is they have a M shaped black mark on the segment behind the head (pronotum) as seen from above looking forward. This of course is of no use when looking at the black morphs. In this case most of them will have some white on the pronotum.

Another good id feature is the leg colour, they are a brownish red as are the antennae. Once you've seen a few of these critters telling them apart from other species becomes easy. Time will tell how nice these guys play with our 2 and 11

spotted ladybird population. There's sure a lot of Giant Willow Aphid to eat, so they won't go hungry at Travis.



Harlequin Ladybird larvae



Pied / Black Stilt hybrid



Red Damselfly



Black Swan



Travis paddock in early June flood

Images: Grahame

More than dried leaves!

- Article: Eleanor Bissell, Image: Dave Evans

The Travis Wednesday Work Group visited the Allan Herbarium (a collection of dried plant specimens) at Lincoln one Wednesday in March. We chose the option of travelling by public bus to the venue (watching our carbon footprint!) and were greeted unexpectedly by a fluttering Japanese butterfly. Its caterpillar a bio control for honey suckle!

The collection was way beyond our expectations — so many specimens collected by botanists Banks & Solander during Captain Cook's first voyage to NZ dated 1769—70. Paula also showed us a specimen collected by the late Daphne Banks from Travis! The Herbarium houses over 620,000 specimens with 5,000 to 8,000 being added annually.



Honshu White Admiral

The Herbarium databases are the repository for knowledge of NZ's flora and fauna. Specimens are carefully dried and meticulously mounted on lovely sheets of paper then carefully filed in metal cupboards in temperature controlled rooms.



Ines showing us samples from the extensive collection

It was fascinating to see a wooden 'rose' which forms when the fungi *Dactylanthus taylori* emerges from a host tree root in the shape of a rose! The fungi emits a pheromone which attracts endangered ground feeding short tailed bats that suck on

the sugary taste and help with pollination when in contact with the food source. Pollen from the plant has also been found in old Kākāpō droppings.

A seed ball of *Ruppia* slightly larger than a soft ball was on display — it was formed during storms in Lake Ellesmere, washed ashore and was collected.

Huge thank you's to Ines and Paula for sharing their valuable time and knowledge with us.

We rounded our amazing outing off with coffee at a local Café, then a leisurely bus trip back to Christchurch.

Wayne's Wednesday Weeders

- Article and images: Eleanor Bissell

Come rain or shine 10am Wednesday sees our group at Travis working. We clear weedy patches: ivy, convulvulus, blackberry, wire weed along the pathways, yellow lupin,

veldtgrass and mallow, which frequents the horse paddock in particular. Veldtgrass persists. It's from South Africa and is particularly invasive in areas where the soil is disturbed; flowers for at least 10 months of the year and is difficult to control.

Plants are watered as the need arises, dead branches removed from trees along pathways as well as lots of releasing and replacement of plants that haven't made it. The 'Muehlenbeckia Maze' (behind the cottage near the Ed Centre) is maintained, Wayne keeps the pathway & tunnels clear so children and adults can have fun! The Lizard Hilton and the Boreing Drip also benefit from the volunteers' intensive labours.

Rewards? Listening to the birds as we work, swans conversing in loud voices among themselves, so nice to hear thrushes chortling and the deep call of the Australian Cape Barren goose (the closest we have to our extinct NZ goose). Walkers often stop to say thank you.



We discover patches of wanted plants flourishing and producing fruit as well as seedlings — tōtara, white pine, lace bark – it's exciting and rewarding.

The most exciting reward this year was splashing through flooded waters in our gummies, with our equipment, to reach drier ground where we could work!!!

Fishy Business

- Article: Dave Evans

The CCC rangers have been working on a number of fish related projects this year. If you've called by Charlie's seat you may have noticed the eels that are used to being fed there. They will come part way out of the water for a treat. The bank to the pond has been in danger of collapsing so the rangers have decided to use gabion baskets containing clean river rocks to reinforce the pond edge.

Early in May trapping was done in association with DOC to see if any mudfish could be detected. This was near where some were released about 10 years ago. Unfortunately no mudfish were caught. Seven water samples were analysed for the presence of mudfish and other species of interest. Results showed a strong signal of short-finned eel, a weaker signal of long-finned eel and no sign of mudfish.

At hard rush corner by the Travis Rd / Frost Rd roundabout the flap gate on the culvert through to Lake Kate Sheppard was removed to improve fish access. The gate was part of a system for pushing water around the wetland, but hasn't been needed since changes to the water table as a result of the earthquakes.

Travis Wetland Trust Meetings

The Travis Wetland Trust board meets monthly on the Tuesday following the work day, from 6.30pm — 8.30pm at the Travis Wetland Education Centre. The board extends a welcome to all who wish to attend.

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